

On some Moroccan Butterflies

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The butterfly fauna of Morocco still requires a considerable amount of research from both taxonomic and faunistic points of view. As there is no comprehensive recent paper on Moroccan butterflies every record could be of some interest. This lack of records seems a common feature not only of certain areas, but also of certain periods of the year, the latter being one of the causes for writing this paper.

Owing to the extreme kindness of my learned colleagues, Miss Nadya Gawadi and Mr Martin Wilson of the Department of Zoology at Cambridge University, I have been able to study over 50 specimens of butterflies collected in two distinct areas in Morocco at the very beginning of September 1971. Although both N. Gawadi and M. Wilson are not entomologists and travelled for other purposes, they most willingly spent several hours of their valuable time energetically collecting Rhopalocera. I am greatly indebted to them for this favour. All specimens, belonging to nine species, have been deposited in the author's collection.

Collecting has been carried out in two different localities:

Taroudant

A small town on the main road from Marakesh to Agadir on the southern foothills of the Atlas Mountains, some 81 km. east of Agadir, at the altitude of some 250 m or thereabout. Collected on 1st and 2nd September 1971 among orchards, alfalfa fields and on rough uncultivated ground covered with bushes of "maquis" type and low vegetation with numerous flowering Compositae herbs.

Essauira.

A town on the Atlantic coast, on the main road from Agadir to Casablanca, some 176 km north of Agadir, at the altitude of about 20-30 m. Collected on 4th September 1971 mostly on sandy soils among the coastal dunes and rough ground covered with thorny bushes and grass.

The following species have been observed and collected:

Pieris rapae L.

Although all the specimens—except for a single male—are rather small in size, the examination of androconia has shown just the usual broad variability.

Taroudant, 1.-2/9/1971 — 2 ♂♂, 3 ♀♀. Essauira, 4/9/1971 — 3 ♂♂.

Pieris brassicae L.

The examination of androconia has shown certain similarity to those of the specimens from the Canary Isles, and, perhaps to a less extent to those from Spain, and

remarkable differences from those of specimens from the other North African countries.

Essaurina, 4/9/71 — 1 ♂.

Pontia daplidice L.

A single worn specimen only.

Essaura, 4/9/1971 — 1 ♀.

Colias crocea Fourcr.

Both males of this migrant species are quite small and freshly emerged, the female is worn and battered.

Taroudant, 1/9/1971—2 ♂♂. Essaura, 4/9/1971—1 ♀.

Danaus chrysippus L.

As this species is regarded as a rare migrant in Morocco, it is very interesting to notice that it was commonly seen flying quickly over rough ground and settling unfrequently on Compositae flowers. Only four specimens were caught owing both to its fast flight and to the roughness of terrain. All of them were caught freshly emerged, but one is badly mechanically damaged. It is understood that the specimens must have bred within the locality.

Taroudant, 1-2/9/1971 — 1 ♂, 3 ♀♀.

Pararge aegeria L.

Only two very small and worn specimens.

Essaura, 4/9/1971 — 1 ♂, 1 ♀.

Syntarusus pirithous L.

Very common on alfalfa fields, but most of the specimens rather worn.

Taroudant, 1-2/9/1971 — 9 ♂♂, 3 ♀♀.

Tarucus theophrastus Fabr.

Common on alfalfa field and in their vicinity

Taroudant, 1-2/9/1971 — 8 ♂♂, 2 ♀♀.

Zizeeria knysna Trimen.

Found sporadically, not common.

Taroudant, 1/9/1971 — 3 ♂♂, 2 ♀♀.

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